Q1   Rosie Oxbury*

The forms and functions of "Breaking into song" during in-group conversations

Abstract: This article adopts an interactional sociolinguistic perspective to investigate the forms and functions of breaking into song in in-group interaction. The data are approximately two hours of interaction among three sisters in their home, during which the sisters occasionally sing together or make references to songs they know. I examine how singing in interaction promotes affiliation and solidarity between participants. In terms of form, the turn-by turn format of instances of singing is investigated, and evidence is presented to argue that joint singing constitutes a speech activity. In terms of function, it is argued that joint singing is a site of shared affect. Singing also makes participants' relationship with one another relevant in the interaction at hand by indexing the familiarity dimension of that relationship. These affordances of singing allow it to become a resource at moments of trouble to restore affiliation.

Keywords: singing, in-group interaction, speech activity, affect, familiarity, interactional sociolinguistics

1 Introduction

Anecdotally, breaking into song is a common occurrence in interactions between people who are close to one another – for example, in family circles or between friends. Yet little is known about why this phenomenon should be so prevalent in in-group interaction. In the data analysed here, such moments of singing appear in the middle of conversation in a natural and apparently spontaneous way. The phrase "breaking into song" is the term participants themselves come up with in metacommentary on their own tendency to sing at and with each other. The singing may be as brief as one person singing a single line of a song, or the other participants in the talk may all join in. I examine how such instances of singing fit into the structure of interaction, and what functions this activity serves in terms of the interpersonal relations manifested in the talk.

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*Corresponding author: Rosie Oxbury, Department of Linguistics, Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, UK, E-mail: r.f.oxbury@qmul.ac.uk

This article will suggest that singing in interaction plays a key role in the sharing 1
of positive affect and in the maintenance of solidarity. In this way, singing can
be seen as contributing to intimacy between participants (Jefferson et al. 1978;
Coates 2007).

Recent work in discourse analytic and conversation analytic studies have 5
seen increased interest in non-linguistic aspects of interaction, including vocal
devices such as laughter (Glenn 2003), multimodal resources such as nodding
(Stivers 2008), spatial arrangement of the body (Mondada 2016) and, more
recently, humming (Stevanovic 2013) and singing (Frick 2013; Stevanovic and
Frick 2014). The current study contributes to work in the area of singing in 10
interaction by investigating breaking into song in in-group interactions. The two
goals are:

(1) To provide a framework for analysing the structuring of singing in inter-
     action; and

(2) To examine the interpersonal functions of breaking into song.   15

Following Sections 2 and 3 – dealing with literature review and data, respec-
tively – the analysis in Section 4 focuses on (1). Following insights from
Rampton (2006), instances of singing are analysed in terms of an initiating
line of the song and common patterns of uptake. Section 4.1 describes three 20
possible patterns of uptake: no response, evaluation or joint singing. The third
type, joint singing, is in Section 4.2 – argued to be a particular speech activity
(Gumperz 1982) – with certain structural features identifying this activity or
frame: it is cued by singing voice, and it is at odds with concurrent ongoing
activities; it also shows hallmarks of being a play frame (Coates 2007). Joint 25
singing conflicts with other conversational activities, meaning that participants
break off from their conversation and put ordinary talk on hold while they are
singing together.

Section 5 addresses (2), the interpersonal functions of breaking into song. In
Section 5.1, the analysis shows that joint singing facilitates shared positive 30
affectivity, making it enjoyable to participants. Participants are not only willing
to put their conversation on hold in order to engage in joint singing, but in the
current data, they show signs of re-starting or prolonging joint singing. This is
taken as evidence of participants "savouring" the positive affect that comes with
joint singing (Selting 2017). Meanwhile, Section 5.2 shows that both joint singing 35
and evaluation as uptake options index participants' familiarity with one
another (Svennevig 1999), and so both kinds of uptake contribute positively to
the maintenance of interpersonal relationships in interaction. Finally, Section
5.3 shows how singing can be a resource to restore affiliation between partic-
ipants at moments of trouble.   40

Q2

Q3

2 Literature review: Singing in interaction

Previous studies in social interaction and conversation analysis have shown how singing in interaction can serve a variety of functions. Stevanovic and Frick (2014) investigate singing in both musical (church-related) and everyday settings. Taking Tomasello's (2008) three motives of cooperative communication (requesting, informing, sharing) as a starting point, they show how singing can underpin communication that is oriented towards sharing. In such cases, singing leads to joint action, shared stance and group solidarity. However, singing is of less help than spoken communication when the communicative goal is either informing or requesting.

Frick (2013) relates singing to codeswitching, analysing how both may be used in sequence closures. In particular, singing can be used in closing sequences where the preceding talk is problematic in some way, in order to shift the topic. Relatedly, Stevanovic (2013) shows how humming can contribute to a shared affiliative stance: humming is a way for participants to maintain non-participation in talk, but simultaneously show a cooperative and non-face-threatening attitude. These studies investigate how singing may serve isolated functions in interaction, but they do not shed further light on why singing seems to be an in-group phenomenon, and why it seems to be enjoyable to participants: the current study aims to shed light in these areas.

Forrester (2010) approaches interactional singing in the light of music psychology, presenting a longitudinal study of a child's development of communicative singing. Initial attempts at singing are dyadic, whereby the child's singing is supported by the singing of the caregiver; later on, the child's singing becomes more independent and more like performance. Forrester (2010) draws on Mang's (2000) finding that in early infancy, speech and song are intertwined, rather than separate modes, showing that from very early on, singing is closely bound up with word play – a point that will also be touched on in Section 4.1 of this paper. Even at the age of 120 weeks, the child is able to creatively manipulate the lyrics of a known song, a tendency which will also be observed in the current data. Forrester's (2010) study thus shows how innate behaviours relating to interaction and singing may be.

Rampton (2006) investigates the interpersonal functions of singing, looking at the use of song in interaction in relation to adolescents' social identity formation. His classification of different types of response to singing will be treated further in Section 4.1. Rampton (2006) notes that girls appear to ratify musical tastes with one another before they engage in either collective or solo singing, whereas the boy in the study, Hanif, sings before inviting any

evaluation of the song from peers. It is observed that individuals would appear to get earworms (cf. Moseley et al. 2018; Beaman and Williams 2010) that they would return to from time to time throughout the day. In general, singing is a source of pleasure, and Rampton sees this as the primary motivation for occurrences of singing throughout the school day. Section 4.1 of this paper will present interactional evidence that supports this point.

Other treatments of singing in interaction include that by Bamberg & Georgakoupoulu (2008), reporting one instance of a boy who breaks into song in a group interaction with peers. They treat this as quotation, analysing it in terms of the speaker's alignment with the singer's persona and with the symbolism of the lyrics of the pop song. Ribeiro (1993) investigates how a psychotic patient shifts frames in an interview with a doctor. Part of the signalling of the psychotic frame comes from "speech play", which is made up of singing, alongside babytalk and other kinds of chants. The idea that singing initiates a frameshift in interaction will be further elaborated on in the current study.

Finally, studies in psychology and musicology have shown that joint music making promotes feelings of belonging (Brisola & Curry 2015; Dassa and Amir 2014; Welch et al. 2014).

3 Data

The data comes from just under two hours of recordings of conversation between three sisters: Blossom was 23 at the time of recording, Eri was 18 and Jodi 17 (all names have been replaced with pseudonyms). They are a British Nigerian family and the recordings were made at their home in London, UK. The data was collected as part of a larger project on English language in London, and was conducted with the informed consent of the participants under the approval of the Queen Mary University of Research Ethics Committee. Blossom made the recordings using an H2 Zoom recorder with lavalier microphone. Blossom made a forty-five minute recording while the three sisters were watching a film, *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (Adamson 2008). The next recording was done while the three were cooking dinner together.

In the data, an utterance was treated as an instance of song either if the participant used singing voice, or if the words recognisably resembled the lyrics of a known song. Non-verbal utterances which could be classed as humming are also included as instances of singing (Stevanovic 2013). Both recordings include 19 such instances each (see below, Section 4.1, Table 1). Transcription conventions are given in the appendix.

4 Analysis I: Forms of breaking into song

In this section I examine the structuring of song in interaction. Section 4.1 investigates patterns of uptake of an initiating line of the song and their relative frequency in the data. Section 4.2 argues that when an initiating line of song is turned into joint singing, this constitutes a speech activity. These analyses of the structuring of song in interaction will be complemented by Section 5, which investigates the functions served by singing in interaction.

4.1 Patterns of uptake

Rampton (2006) provides the basis for the classification of uptakes of singing followed in this paper. The three basic patterns are: solo singing that is not responded to; responding by offering evaluation; and joining in. According to Rampton, most of the time, singing is treated as "'exuded' rather than intended expression" (2006: 106), not demanding a reply. Another possible response is offering an evaluation. And occasionally, "one or more of the people around actually joined in" (2006: 107).

Joining in, offering positive evaluation, and not responding, will all be treated in this paper as ways of *aligning* with the initiator of the singing. Stivers (2008) distinguishes two kinds of stance-taking that are important to the telling of stories: it is necessary that hearers have a positive stance towards the activity of telling while it is ongoing, and this is described as *alignment*; and there is also the stance of agreement or disagreement, empathy etc. taken by hearers towards the teller of the narrative, labelled *affiliation*. Thus, alignment refers to co-participants' stance towards the activity in progress; affiliation is to do with taking an affective stance that matches the sequence initiator's own projected stance. In the case of singing in interaction, a response that disaligns with the activity would look like Example 1, where Blossom (B) sings along with the music playing on the radio, but Eri shushes her, and by way of account says "let me listen" (l.3). Eri (E) thus directs Blossom to cease singing.

(1)
1 B: ♪beha-vio-ur♪
2 E: Sh

                      (0.10)
3 E: let me listen

The initiating line of the song is usually a kind of wordplay based on a
phrase used in the preceding discourse (cf. Forrester 2010). The distribution of
different types of response in the data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of different forms of uptake across the two recordings.

	Joint singing	Song reference/ evaluation	Both joint singing & song reference	No uptake	Disalign	Total
Recording 1	5	1	3	10	0	19
Recording 2	5	1	1	8	4	19
Total	10	2	4	18	4	38

Cases of no response are the most common pattern of uptake in the data. In
Example 2, shortly after the beginning of the recording session, Jodi (J) and Eri
(E) are asking Blossom (B) about the recorder she is using. Eri asks "cn you hear
us" (l.3) and this triggers Jodi's use of song in l.5.

(2)
1 J: how long d'you have to do this
2 E: dyou have to speak quite loudly
       (0.12)
3 E: cn you hear us
       (0.41)
4 B: ^I don't really know?
       (0.08)
5 J: ♪ cn you [hea::r me:] ♪
6 E: [(it's in a cool] bag) by the way
       (0.27)
7 E: looks like really professional

Example 2 above shows that even cases where there is an intertextual or verbal
trigger, this does not mandate a response. When Jodi sings in l.5, neither of her sisters
acknowledge this turn. Instead, Eri shifts the topic to the bag that the recorder is kept
in (l.6). Whereas Jodi's use of song could potentially have closed the topic of the
recording device (Frick 2013), Eri in her overlapping turn pursues this topic without
acknowledging Jodi's use of song.

Table 1 shows that non-uptake is the most common form of response, followed ₁
by joint singing. Given that not responding to an initiating line of the song is an
acceptable response, what is the effect when co-participants choose to orient to a
singing – either by joining in, or by offering evaluation? The following sections will
seek to shed light on this issue. Section 4.2 will first argue that joint singing is a type ₅
of frame that is collaboratively initiated and maintained by co-participants. Section 5
will then examine the functions served by singing in interaction.

4.2 Joint singing as a speech activity   ₁₀

Joint singing is a special kind of frame or speech activity (Gumperz 1982). Its key
features are: other activities may get put on hold in order to maintain the singing
frame; it is a play frame (Bateson 1953; Coates 2007), often marked by co-
occurrence with laughter; and it differs from evaluation as an uptake option ₁₅
by being ratified as a singing frame by a co-participant.

"Frame" is used here more or less synonymously with "speech activity" as
defined by Gumperz (1982). This in turn is based on Goffman's (1974) definition
of frame. Indeed, "Gumperz's notion of speech activity is thus a type of frame"
(Tannen 1993: 4). Under Gumperz's (1982: 131) definition, a speech activity is a ₂₀
recognisable "organizing principle" which determines how participants' actions
are to be interpreted. The link between the linguistic forms used in the inter-
action and the activity frame within which meaning is generated is *contextual-
ization cues*. Contextualization cues are "constellations of surface features of
message form"; they "are the means by which speakers signal and listeners ₂₅
interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and *how*
each sentence relates to what precedes or follows" (Gumperz 1982: 131). As such,
the use of singing voice forms the chief contextualization cue by which a special
singing frame is recognised as the "organizing principle" under which partic-
ipants' actions are to be interpreted. The use of singing voice "flags" the utter- ₃₀
ance as being a quotation of song (cf. Klewitz and Couper-Kuhlen 1999).

4.2.1 Joint singing conflicts with other conversational activities

₃₅

The status of joint singing as a speech activity is particularly suggested by the
way in which it interacts with other conversational activities, and indeed con-
flicts with other frames (Tannen and Wallat 1993: 67).

In Example 3, Blossom (B), Jodi (J) and Eri (E) have been watching a film, and
during the adverts, the discussion turns to the half-time show at the Super Bowl ₄₀

2016. The mention of the half-time show triggers Blossom in l.5 to begin singing
Uptown Funk (Ronson and Mars 2014), as this song was performed during the show.
While Jodi and Blossom sing this song, Eri begins asking them about the Superbowl
performances that year.

(3)
```
1   E:  ↑oh this is him at the ↑superbowl=
2   B:  =ye-eah¿
3   J:  ((american accent))su(.)perbo:[:::wl]
4   E:                                [ ( ... ) ]
5   B:          ((american accent)) ♪[this] is that ice cold
6       michelle fi fr dat white gold♪
        (0.23)
7   J:  ♪this was the good girl (thair) good girls
        [hm uh mm u-]♪
8   E:  [great MAsterpieces]
9   B:  ♪ sty::[lin, fai::lin] ♪
10  E:         [how did - ha - did you watch it?]
11  B:  Ye-eah¿=
12  J:  ♪ =[livin it up in the cit-eh] ♪
13  B:  ♪ =[livin it up in the cit-eh] ♪
14  E:  =[but like how did he set it] out
15      with coldplay and beyonce
        (0.37)
16  B:  um, so, coldplay did a little introduction bit
        (0.26)
17  B:  and the:n
18  J:  ♪ [ta ta ta, ta-ta ta=
19  B   [Bruno Mars and Mark Ronson were doing and he=
20  J:                                =ta-ta ta] ♪
21  B:                                =did a little dance?]
```

This example shows how speech can be coordinated around singing. While
Jodi and Blossom are engaged in joint singing, Eri pursues a different activity:
the sharing of information. Eri begins formulating a question or remark in l.4,
overlapping with the end of Jodi's turn (l.3). However, Blossom has already
begun singing the first line of *Uptown Funk* (l.5). After a micropause, Jodi
supplies the next line of the song (l.7), ratifying the joint singing as a frame.
Eri switches to the singing frame, quoting "great masterpieces" (l.8), a line that
occurs at this point in the recorded version of the song. However, as Blossom

sings the next line (l.9), Eri switches back to the information-seeking activity, overlapping Blossom's singing with a question (l.10). Blossom coordinates between the activity being pursued by Eri, and the activity she is engaged in with Jodi: she times her response to Eri in l.11 to fit in with the timing of the song, allowing her and Jodi to carry on singing in l.12–13. However, Eri again overlaps their singing with a question (l.14–15), this time one that demands a more complex answer. In l.16, Blossom indicates that she will take the floor with "um", and signals topic continuity with "so", signalling that the topic of the Super Bowl performance will be continued as talk rather than in a singing frame.

In this way, the three participants seek to maintain a singing frame in conjunction with a separate activity – information sharing – but manage to do this only for a few moments before the latter activity type takes precedence over singing. The idea that participants seek to maintain singing as long as possible will be elaborated on in Section 5.1. Meanwhile, as Blossom orients to the information-sharing activity initiated by Eri in l.10 and 14–15, Jodi switches to singing non-verbally (l.18–20), singing the song that Coldplay performed, as just mentioned by Blossom (l.16). Her act of singing non-verbally relegates her singing to a background activity, which no longer conflicts with the talk between Blossom and Eri.

4.2.2 A type of play frame

Certain features of joint singing indicate that it is a kind of play frame. Many of the features of talk in a play frame (Coates 2007) – overlapping speech, co-constructed utterances, repetition – are already inevitable features of joint singing (Stevanovic and Frick 2014). But joint singing also frequently co-occurs with laughter, another sign of a play frame (Coates 2007). Singing also carries some features of humorous discourse, such as humour via bisociation (Norrick 2000), and humour support (Hay 2001).

These features can be seen in Example 4. Jodi (J) has just related to Blossom (B) and Eri (E) that a mutual friend has had "two of her teeth out". Blossom and Eri showed emotive involvement in their reactions to this news, assuming that the friend had an accident, but then Jodi revealed that it happened at the dentist – an ending to the story that was treated as anticlimactic. At the start of Example 4, Jodi says "she couldn't feel half her face though" (l.1), and this provides the trigger for Eri to begin singing the popular song *Can't Feel My Face* (The Weeknd 2015).

(4)   1
1   J: she couldn't feel half her face though.
2   B: aw[w-a
3   E: ♪ [I can't feel my face when I'm with you:] ♪
4   B: ♪ [can't feel my face when I'm with you:] ♪   5
5   J: ♪ [when I'm with you:] ♪
        (0.59)
6   B: ♪at the dentist♪=
7   J: =♪at the [dentist] ♪
8   E: [oh mah goodNESS]   10
9   B: ♪ [at the] dentist♪
10 J: ♪at the dentist♪
11 E: at the DENTIST
12 J: [he he HU hu HE HE hu]
13 B: [hh he hu hh hh hh]   15
14 E: [A-HU-hu HA hu] hu

Jodi's introduction of song into the conversation creates bisociative humour: the
sexual connotations and excitement in the source text are juxtaposed with the
mundane and unpleasant scenario of being at the dentist's surgery. Blossom   20
does humour support by substituting "at the dentist" (l.6) for the lyrics of the
song, *but I love it* (The Weeknd 2015). Eri further contributes to the humour by
adding an American accent and doing mock emotive involvement (l.8, 11). As
the humour gets collaboratively escalated in this way, the singing then termi-
nates in joint laughter (l.12–14).   25

4.2.3 Joint singing is co-constructed

If the initiating line of the song is to be turned into joint singing, rather than   30
followed up with evaluation (see Section 4.1 above), a co-participant must join
in either with the initiating line of the song or in the next line. Often, this
happens within the initiating line.
    In Example 5, an animal has just appeared in the film that the sisters are
watching, and immediately before the extract, the sisters discussed whether it   35
was a buck or a deer. At the beginning of the extract, Jodi's (J) utterance "it's a
male deer" (l.1) is the trigger for Blossom (B) to begin singing "Doe a deer" (l.2,
Wise 1965). Jodi joins in for the second half of the initiating line (l.3).

                                                                             40

(5)   1
1 J: it's a male deer
       (0.48)
2 B: ♪doe. a ↑deer. [a ↑female ↑deer] ♪
3 J: ♪ [a female deer] ♪   5
       (0.19)
4 B: ♪ray♪
       (0.52)
5 J: ♪a drop of golden sa:::n♪
       (0.09)   10
6 B: ♪me=
7 J: =♪a ↑name. I call my↑self♪

A singing frame is not inevitable until a co-participant has ratified it as such. In
some cases, it may be possible for the singer of the initiating line to mandate   15
joining in as the preferred response. This can also be seen in Example 5. After
Blossom and Jodi have sung the first line of the song, Blossom begins the next
line, "ray" (l.4), and pauses. By pausing here, Blossom mandates a call-and-
response sequence; "ray" becomes the first part of an adjacency pair. It is not
inevitable that Jodi will join in, as indicated by the pause of nearly half a second   20
between l.4 and l.5. Jodi then completes the line of the song (l.5), suggesting that
it would be dispreferred for her not to join in.

5 Analysis II: Functions of breaking into song   25

The features of singing established in Section 4 already give some indications as
to why people break into song in interaction: joint singing generates a play
frame, which we know is a means of creating intimacy (Coates 2007). The
following Sections (5.1 and 5.2) will develop these consequences of singing in   30
interaction in terms of shared affect (Selting 2017) and interpersonal relation-
ships (Svennevig 1999).

5.1 Joint singing and shared affect   35

That singing in interaction is related to shared affect is suggested by Stevanovic
and Frick (2014), who argue that singing is of limited use to participants aiming to
make a request or share information, and that its key affordance is in the sharing

                                                                                            40

of stances. It was already suggested above that participants must make some 1
effort to coordinate singing with concurrent activites, or put other activities on
hold in order to maintain the singing frame. Here I will present evidence that
participants actively prolong joint singing. This in turn suggests that joint singing
is associated with positive emotions and shared affect among participants.   5

It is known that conversation participants seek to prolong activities that are
connected with intersubjectivity and togetherness, and the sharing of positive
affect. Selting (2017) describes this as "savouring" in relation to the prolonging of
shared affect at the climax of amusing stories: "The display of 'amusement' is thus
'savored', even 'celebrated' and prolonged by both participants in turn – as if to 10
enjoy it a little longer" (Selting 2017: 11). Similarly, Glenn (2003) analyses the
strategies by which participants may extend laughter beyond its natural termina-
tion. "Shared laughter can display co-orientation or alignment of laughers ... and
provide a sequential basis for displays of conversational intimacy. Extended shared
laughter marks an episode of celebration in talk" (Glenn 2003: 84). Here it will be 15
shown that singing, too, may get extended, "as if to enjoy it a little longer".

Example 6 follows sequentially from Example 4, in which the three sisters
briefly engaged in joint singing, before the singing gave way to shared laughter.
As the sisters' laughter tails off, a transition relevance place emerges (Glenn
2003: 73). Blossom's "oh gosh" (l.1) acknowledges the joint laughing and 20
expresses appreciation of the laughter and the laughable. There is a lengthy
pause of around one second and then Blossom begins a new utterance with
"um" (l.2): she self-selects for the next turn and projects a topic shift.

```
(6)                                                                       25
1   B:  oh gosh
        (1.23)
2   B:  um:,
3   E:  ^♪I can't feel my    [↑fa:::ce]♪
4   J:                       [you should make it like]              30
5   J:  some kind of   [like d-
6   B:                  ^♪ [when I'm with you] ♪
7   E:                  ^♪ [when I'm with you] ♪
        (0.05)
8   B:  ♪at the dentist♪=                                          35
9   E:  =♪at the dentist♪=
10  B:  =♪at the dentist♪=
11  E:  =♪at the dentist♪
12  B:  a-[HA]
13  J:  [we should make it] some <kind of thing>                  40
```

Immediately, Eri begins singing again (l.3) and Blossom joins in (l.6). Eri ₁
and Blossom thus collaboratively restart the joint singing, picking up the song at
the point where they had left off. In this way, although Blossom had projected a
return to ordinary talk in l.2, Eri renews the singing frame and Blossom collab-
orates with her to extend it. Even though Blossom has treated the termination of ₅
laughter as a transition relevance place, when Eri returns to the singing frame,
Blossom aligns with this move. This suggests that, like shared laughter or shared
affect at the climax of amusing stories, there is something fundamentally enjoy-
able about singing together that leads participants to collaborate in extending it.

₁₀

5.2 Singing indexes familiarity

Svennevig (1999) writes that there are three components to an interpersonal rela-
tionship: solidarity, or mutual rights and obligations; familiarity, which is how ₁₅
much personal knowledge the participants have of each other; and affect, which
consists of mutual liking or disliking. These three components are displayed and
contributed to by conversational strategies, such as "face work and conversational
style, and the establishment of common ground" (Svennevig 1999: 2). Shared
knowledge is part of the familiarity component. Part of what makes singing enjoy- ₂₀
able to participants may be that it indexes their familiarity with one another; in this
way, it promotes solidarity not just through the creation of shared affect, but by
making relevant the personal knowledge that participants have of one another. This
section presents an example where a response to singing that on the face of it
disaligns with the singing, is actually treated as affiliative (Stivers 2008), because it ₂₅
makes explicit the interpersonal familiarity that is made relevant in the use of song.

In Example 7, the three sisters are cooking together in the kitchen and have
just finished discussing the definition of a tray as opposed to a pan. As the topic
has been exhausted, Eri (E) closes one sequence with the idiom "Times like
these" in l.2 (cf. Drew & Holt 1995). This triggers Blossom to sing *Times Like* ₃₀
These in l.3 (Foo Fighters 2003). Jodi (J) overlaps Blossom's singing, shouting
"How did I know" (l.4). Blossom (B) starts laughing before Jodi has even
finished this turn (l.5). Blossom then answers Jodi's rhetorical question, saying
"Because you were thinking it too" (l.6).

₃₅

(7)
1 B: really
       (0.1)
2 E: times like these, man
       (0.69)

₄₀

3 B: ♪in the ti:mes like [the:(h)se♪=   1
4 J: [HOW did I <u>kno</u>(h)w]
5 B: =t-hh] ha ha ha ha ha
6 B: ((smiling voice))(h)because <u>you</u> were thinkin it <u>too:</u>

                                                                          5
In this way, Blossom offers the initiating line of the song, and rather than
responding with one of the appropriate aligning responses – joining in,
offering an evaluation, or giving no response – Jodi gives a response that is
on the face of it disaligning. Jodi shows exasperation in a playful format.
Earlier in the same recording session, Jodi had suggested that the three sisters   10
should give up "break[ing] into song" and "song references" in conversation
with one another for a whole day. Jodi's turn in l.4 treats Blossom's singing
turn as violating the new "rules" that Jodi has imposed. Jodi's mock exasper-
ation targets the predictability of Blossom's turn in l.3: Jodi implies that it was
predictable to her that Blossom would begin to sing this song in response to   15
the trigger given by Eri in l.2.

    The following sequence indicates that whereas Jodi is doing mock disaligning,
her action is actually received as affiliative. As soon as Jodi begins her turn with
"HOW" (l.4), laughter becomes audible in Blossom's singing in "the:(h)se" (l.3). As
Blossom begins laughing in l.5, a laughter particle is also heard in "kno(h)w" in   20
Jodi's utterance (l.4). Blossom then gives five loud laughter particles (l.5) and
continues, in smiling voice, "you were thinking it too" (l.6). Although Jodi did
not join in singing, Blossom's response in her subsequent turns orients to the fact
that Jodi could have joined in. Shared laughter is generated over the fact that the
two participants were thinking the same thing at the same time.   25

    Investigating the relationship between laughter and intimacy, Coates (2007: 31)
states that conversation in a play frame is reliant on "shared knowledge and in-
group norms"; consequently,

> The creation of solidarity is an inevitable consequence of the joint construction of a play
> frame, since interactants who collaborate in humorous talk, 'necessarily display how finely   30
> tuned they are to each other'. (Davies 2003: 1362) (Coates 2007: 32)

Although responding to singing with evaluation does not initiate a frame in the
way that joining in singing does, the two patterns of response, and indeed any
response that recognizes the song being sung, have in common that they are a   35
display of the participants' familiarity with one another, and so also ratify the
participants' group belonging. This is likely one of the things that makes the use
of singing enjoyable in in-group conversation. Part of the fun of it is not just in
the singing itself, but in this demonstration of being so "finely tuned" to the co-
participants.   40

The following example suggests that being able to reference songs in con- 1
versation is actually an important reason why the sisters maintain shared knowl-
edge of popular songs. It is known that listening to popular music is closely
associated with individuals' experiences of their own identity:

> Listening to music has always been a social activity: listening with peers or sharing 5
> musical evaluations with friends helps individuals to shape their taste while concurrently
> constructing a group identity. (van Dijck 2006: 367)

In Example 8, the three sisters are still watching the film *Prince Caspian*.
Blossom has seen the film before, and so is able to correctly predict what will 10
happen next. This makes it relevant for her to say "I remember" (l.1). This
provides the trigger for Jodi (J) and Blossom (B) to quote *Worst Behavior* by
Drake (Drake 2014) in l.3–4.

(8)   15
1   B: I remember
        (0.2)
2   J: chh hu hu
        (0.39)
3   B: [_wRst behaviour]   20
4   J: [_wRst behaviour]
        (0.98)
5   E: ((whisper))oh gosh
6   J: hh   [hh hh hh]
7   E: [hu hu hu hu]   25
        (0.1)
8   B: you still need to listen to that mix tape
        (0.26)
9   J: ♪doo doo du doo [lu loo] lu loo lu loo=
10 E: [do I]   30
11 J: =[lu loo]♪
12 B: [yeah]
13 B: so you can get all these random references

The quoting of the song is momentary, and does not extend beyond l.3–4. Eri's next 35
utterance, "oh gosh" (l.5), could either be directed at the film, or could be a move to
disalign with her sisters, and she and Eri laugh (l.6–7). But Blossom's next utterance
refers back to the song she and Jodi have just quoted: she says to Eri "You still need
to listen to that mixtape" (l.8). Blossom accounts for her assertion by stating "so you
can get all these random references" (l.13). The reason Blossom gives as to why Eri 40

should listen to the mixtape is not so that Eri can enjoy the music, nor so that she can understand why Blossom enjoys the music, but so that she can be a full participant in interactions such as these. As with jokes, song reference is apparently more entertaining when everyone gets it (Norrick 2000): Blossom treats Eri's failure to join in with the song reference as dispreferred.

5.3 Singing can be a resource at moments of trouble

In this section, we will further consider the interpersonal and affective dimension of singing in interaction by looking at an instance where singing becomes a strategy for remedying a moment of trouble. Singing becomes a resource not just in initiating a topic shift (Frick 2013), but in returning participants to shared epistemic territory (cf. Sierra 2016), namely discussion of their repertoire of popular songs they know. That singing is successful in restoring affiliation can be seen from the change in key (Goffman 1974): the conversation shifts from being marked by "disaffiliative disfluencies" (Piazza 2006) to being more synchronised (Koudenburg et al. 2011).

Q4

In Example 9, the three sisters are watching the film *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (Adamson 2008). Commenting on a character in the film, Blossom observes "Nice earring" (l.1). She then shifts the topic to her own plan to get another piercing (she already has three, two in one ear and one in the other), and seeks her sisters' opinions. Eri, however, withholds affiliation. As Blossom (B) continues to pursue an affiliative response from Eri (E), Jodi (J) eventually sings a line of the song, and Blossom responds immediately with an evaluation. The three sisters then collaboratively construct a topic shift.

(9)
1   B: nice earring
       (1.59)
2   B: speaking of earring
3   B: I'm thinking of getting that fourth piercing:
       (0.06)
4   B: Tomorrow
       (3.72)
5   J: °hoo, wow°
       (0.28)
6   J: oh, >>did that thing<< on your top (.) ear, close?
       (1.57)
7   B: I'm not sure if it clo-osed
8   B: (but it) closed, but I took it out, like ↑ages ago remember?

```
       (0.26)                                              1
9   J:  oh yeah.
[…]
10  B:  that's the best fake smile I've ever seen¿
11  J:  they're li\        [oh yeah?]                      5
12  B:                     [um,]
13  B:  but yeah I'm thinking of getting it tomorrow
       (1.12)
14  E:  getting what.
       (0.52)                                             10
15  B:  nother piercing?
16  B:  here¿
       (0.49)
17  E:  why
       (0.47)                                             15
18  B:  make it symmetrical¿
       (1.05)
19  E:  okay
       (0.97)
20  B:  how do YOU feel.                                  20
       (0.42)
21  E:  I dunno
       (2.66)
22  B:  ts hh hh
       (0.87)                                             25
23  B:  why
       (0.86)
24  E:  I dunno, I mean,
       (4.05)
25  B:  What are your feelings                            30
       (1.18)
26  E:  I dno:,
27  E:  why did you take out the top one, you don't know
       (0.72)
28  E:  °(so …)°=                                         35
29  B:  =I took out the top one because it
       (0.07)
30  B:  pissed off dad a lot¿
       (1.18)
                                                          40
```

31	B:	but Dad doesn't mind these ones down here	1
		(0.16)	
32	E:	I'd rather you didn't	
33	E:	I feel like he doesn't like (having) piercings at all.	
		(5.38)	5
34	J:	ooh	
		(1.08)	
35	B:	^yeah but I feel like it's not even an extra ↑piercing,	
36	B:	if any - u-	
37	B:	like,	10
38	B:	th- making it symmetrical,	
		(0.78)	
39	B:	leike,	
		(0.69)	
40	B:	I dunno:¿ just this random third piercing	15
		(0.86)	
41	B:	this and like no rhyme or [↑reason]	
42	E:	[((cough))kh-hh]	
		(0.75)	
43	J:	♪rhy:me and ↑REAson reign once mo:::re♪=	20
44	B:	=I love that film	
		(0.23)	
45	E:	what film is at?=	
		(0.08)	
46	B:	=Um:, the [phantom tollbooth?]=	25
47	J:	[phantom tollbooth]=	
48	E:	=oh the book that, I [(lent to you)]	
49	B:	[yeahyeah]eaheah.	
50	E:	okay	
51	J:	ah rea[d it]	30
52	B:	[but the FILM of] it is [really good too]	
53	J:	[it's SO cool¿]	
		(0.15)	
54	J:	such a cool book	
		(0.52)	35
55	E:	is it on th- like youtube?	
56	B:	yeah	
		(0.12)	
57	E:	we can watch it tom↑orrow	
			40

The conversation up to l.43 appears stilted, with Blossom fishing for her 1
sisters' opinions, while Jodi and especially Eri withhold from offering a positive
evaluation of her plan to get a fourth piercing. Blossom's statement that she is
"thinking of" (l.3) getting a piercing frames her utterance as a suggestion rather
than a definite statement, and so invites the preferred response of positive 5
evaluation of this plan. However, her introduction of this topic is initially
followed by almost 4 seconds of silence (l.4–5), and eventually Jodi prompts
for justification of this plan (l.6). Blossom gives an account (l.7–8) and with the
rhetorical question "remember?" she presents this information as having been
already available to Jodi; Jodi in turn acknowledges this information as already 10
accessible (l.9), but Jodi still does not indicate affiliation with Blossom's plan to
get another piercing. After some brief comments on the film (between l.9–10, not
included in transcript), Blossom again attempts to shift the topic back to her
proposed piercing. With "um, but yeah" (l.12–13), Blossom signals topic shift to
non-new information. Her almost exact repetition of the original statement – 15
"I'm thinking of getting it tomorrow" (l.13) – makes a direct response to the new
piercing relevant: she recasts her first utterance with only minimal adjustments.

After a pause of one second (l.13–14), Eri responds. Eri's utterance (l.14)
signals a problem with the topic: "getting what" targets the "it" in Blossom's
utterance; whereas Blossom in l.8 and l.13 frames the piercing as a topic that is 20
already accessible to her sisters, Eri casts the piercing as not being retrievable.
After Blossom clarifies (l.15–16), Eri asks "why". When Blossom replies that she
wishes to make her piercings symmetrical, Eri replies "okay" (l.19). *Okay* is
multifunctional (Gaines 2011) and it is ambiguous whether here it indicates
that Eri has understood which part of Blossom's ear will be pierced, or that 25
she agrees with Blossom's plan; if it is the latter, it is sufficiently weak to
actually constitute a dispreferred response.

Eventually, Blossom directly solicits an evaluative response (l.20, 23, 25) but
Eri withholds and instead hedges, repeatedly saying "I dunno" (l.21, 24, 26). In
spite of these warning signs, Blossom pursues the topic, until Eri eventually 30
offers her position, "I'd rather you didn't" (l.32). Being dispreferred, this is
followed by a hedge, "I feel like …", and an account, "… he doesn't like (having)
piercings at all" (l.33). Even though Eri has stated her position and disagreed
with Blossom's plan to get an extra piercing, Blossom continues justifying her
own position and pursuing affiliation from her sisters. She offers justifications 35
(l.35–41), explaining that she wishes to make her piercings symmetrical. There
are several transition relevance places (e. g. between l.36–37, l.37–38, l.38–39),
however, neither of her sisters takes the conversational floor. A preferred
response would be acknowledgement of Blossom's position and validation of
her reasons for getting another piercing. Silence, the actual response, is 40

dispreferred. So instead of allowing this the status of response, Blossom does turn incrementation in l.37–41.

Finally, when Blossom says "this and like no rhyme or reason" (l.41), the trigger is there for Jodi to sing "Rhyme and reason reign once more" (l.43) – a line from a song in the film *The Phantom Tollbooth* (Jones et al. 1970). The change in the key of the discourse is immediate. Whereas before, as we have seen, the interaction was marked by "disaffiliative disfluencies" (Piazza 2006), lines 46–47, 48–49 and 51–53 display overlapped speech. Blossom is first to respond, offering a positive evaluation, "I love that film" (l.44). Eri invites expansion of the film as a topic by asking about it (l.45). Blossom and Jodi overlap in answering Eri (l.46–47) and in again offering positive evaluations of the film and the book (l.51–53). Eri continues pursuing the topic by asking if the film is available on youtube (l.55), and then suggesting watching the film together (l.57). Although not shown in the extract, the sisters continue by making a plan to watch the film together.

In this way, singing in interaction is initiated and oriented to not just as a means of sequence closure (Frick 2013), but by way of shifting the topic back to "common ground" (Svennevig 1999). As we have seen, these three sisters place importance on maintaining a repertoire of songs and cultural forms as shared knowledge. After l.43, the sisters collaborate in making this repertoire of shared knowledge relevant: Jodi does this by introducing the song (l.43), Blossom does this by offering a positive evaluation of the film (l.44), and so making the film available as a topic, and Eri contributes by asking questions and so pursuing the film as a topic (l.45, 55). The change in key and improvement in conversational flow (Koudenburg et al. 2011) is immediately apparent. Through these sequential moves, the sisters move from a position where there is a problematic lack of affiliation between Eri and Blossom, to a topic where the sisters' familiarity with one another is made relevant, and where they can show affiliation. They do this by offering positive evaluations of a film and making plans to watch this film together.

6 Conclusion

This article has analysed both the structuring of song in interaction and its functions. In terms of form, I have expanded on the observations of Rampton (2006) to consider joint singing, evaluation, and no response, as ways of aligning (Stivers 2008) with the use of song in interaction. I have attempted to show that joint singing is a type of "speech activity" (Gumperz 1982), with its key

features being that it conflicts with other concurrent frames, and it is a play ₁
frame (Coates 2007), co-occurring with laughter.

   In terms of the functions singing in interactions serves, this article has used
interactional sociolinguistics to link the local effect of singing in turns at talk to
the broader affective and interpersonal functions. It has been suggested that ₅
joint singing is closely linked with the sharing of positive affect: like other
affective activities such as laughter (Glenn 2003) and the sharing of amusing
stories (Selting 2017), there is evidence that participants seek to prolong joint
singing. The two types of uptake of singing considered in this artcile, joint
singing and evaluation, have in common that they index participants' familiarity ₁₀
with one another (Svennevig 1999). This is another facet that makes the use of
song in conversation enjoyable to participants, as it is a means of creating
intimacy in conversation (Jefferson et al. 1987; Coates 2007). Finally, these
attributes of singing allow it to become a resource at times where participants'
solidarity with one another is at stake.   ₁₅

Transcription conventions

Based on Sidnell (2010: ix–x)   ₂₅

↑	Rise in intonation on that syllable
↓	Step down in intonation on that syllable
^	Rise in voice register
_	Drop in voice register
♪	Musical notes mark the start and finish of singing within a turn
=	No gap between turns
[word]	Overlapped speech
<word>	Slow speech
≫word≪	Fast speech
((sound))	Extralinguistic information
(word)	Transcription uncertain
( )	Unclear speech
(…)	
(0.5)	Silence duration
(.)	Micropause

.	Final intonational contour.	1
?	High rising terminal	
¿	Less extreme rise "?"	
,	Less extreme rise than "¿".	
:	Drawn out sound	5
WOrd	Emphasis	
°word°	Quiet speech	
wo(h)rd	Laughter breaking up a word	
rr	trilled /r/	
R	Postvocalic /r/	10
\	glottal stop	

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Bionote

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Rosie Oxbury

Rosie Oxbury is a current PhD student in the Department of Linguistics at QMUL, conducting research on language change and youth language in London. Her research interests include language contact, variationist sociolinguistics, interactional sociolinguistics and language acquisition.

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